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Developing decision-making expertise in trainee sport and exercise psychologists

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Title: Developing decision-making expertise in trainee sport and exercise psychologists: Supervisor perspectives.

Category: Other

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Objectives: We examined how UK sport and exercise psychology supervisors developed decision-making expertise in trainee sport and exercise psychologists (TSEPs) during their 2-year training qualification.

Design: Cross-sectional, qualitative design.

Method: Participants were 6 UK sport and exercise psychology supervisors (male, n = 6) who supported TSEPs on the British Psychological Society Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP; Stage 2). Participants were enrolled on the Register of Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors (RAPPS) at the time of interview. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and a reflexive thematic analysis applied based on a decision-making framework.

Results: Supervisors encouraged self-discovery in TSEPs, which developed analytical reasoning. Person-centred approaches were particularly accommodating to the development of analytical reasoning. For example, allowing TSEPs to discover their own solutions to client difficulties through a supportive, empowering supervisory relationship. Essentially, participants were helping TSEPs to develop a cognitive representation of how the selected approach may be applied in their own client consultations.

Conclusion: The development of analytical reasoning prepared TSEPs to make decisions at both the programme and intervention level of practice where they explored different options that could be applied to client cases. This model of supervision that mirrors a person-centred model of therapy could also prepare TSEPs for making decisions in an ill-structured and dynamic environment (e.g., at a session level) that is typical of applied sport psychology practice.